

Teaching and Learning Policy



Approved by:	Full Governing Body
Last reviewed on:	January 2024
Next review due by:	February 2026 or sooner

Experiences in early childhood are the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. We will endeavour to ensure we support all children in reaching their potential regardless of their starting points. We passionately believe that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive personally, socially, emotionally and academically. Every child should be excited, engaged and confident in their individual adventure of learning. We will do this by providing a happy, safe, secure, stimulating and challenging range of learning opportunities and experiences, developing excellent relationships with children and families and ensuring we are a sensitive, caring and inclusive setting.

We will help all children develop into unique, inquisitive, kind, adventurous and empowered learners who are active, engaged, resilient, confident and independent in their adventure of learning.

We will do this by:

- ❖ Understanding how young children learn
- ❖ Learning through play
- ❖ Developing nurturing relationships with high quality interactions
- ❖ Working with parents
- ❖ Providing an enabling learning environment
- ❖ Providing high quality outdoor experiences
- ❖ Planning personalised learning

Understanding how young children learn

- Children's brains, from birth, have immensely powerful and flexible capacities to attend to sensory information (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting), including a developing awareness of the body, and the bodies place and movement in space. From birth, the brain has a very powerful capacity to organise experience into categories and make connections between experiences.
- Both under and over-stimulation are potentially damaging to children during sensitive periods of development. Therefore we always offer a rich, stimulating, multi-sensory environment for children, whilst avoiding over stimulation.
- Children all have very different temperaments. Some children need stimulating, questioning and communicative adults in order to encourage them to explore and experiment. But others can have their development hindered by this type of approach, experiencing it as interfering. All children need adults who can respond to conversations, and develop them, and sustain thinking with them.
- Children need to feel emotionally secure at nursery, if they are to have the confidence to explore and learn. They need to feel confident about the transition between home/parent and nursery/key person.
- Children's powerful learning mechanisms mean that a considerable amount of their learning is built by playing and experimenting with high quality learning resources. For example, through many experiences of playing with water and other liquids, children move from simple actions (e.g. a baby flicking water with her fingers) to more complex, co-ordinated actions (e.g. a four year old carefully pouring water from one container into another and then carrying the container over to the sand and mixing the two substances together) Through repeating and practising these physical actions and experiments, children develop concepts about shape, space, and the properties of substances.
- Children are also learning through the movement of their bodies, and feeling sensations on their bodies. Moving the body builds the brain as well as muscles; movements that start off with the body can then be extended to movements of tools and play materials.
- The acquisition of language gives children an additional and immensely powerful mechanism for organising experience and learning from it. Through talking with other children, and real conversation with adults, children are increasingly able to distance themselves from what they are doing and reflect on it, or see another point of view.
- Play is an integrating mechanism in children's learning, bringing together learning and experience in the different domains: social, emotional, sensory, linguistic, physical movement and sense of self in space
- Resources, adult help, and teaching need to be geared to the development of the child.

Learning through Play

We believe that play is the most powerful tool in which children learn to make sense of the world around them, test ideas, develop communication skills, imagination skills, take risks, develop dexterity, amongst many other skills. Meaningful experiences set challenging expectations for children's achievement. They build on what the children already know and can do, therefore encouraging a positive attitude and disposition to learn. Well-planned play experiences are central to each child's learning and development. Children's learning does not fit neatly into separate compartments; continuous provision that children can access in a play based environment will develop skills and understanding across several areas of learning. An example of this can be

seen when a child is building with wooden blocks: she or he is learning to develop physical, creative and numerical skills. The child may also be developing play with a friend, learning skills of negotiation, and other social skills, as well as using language for communication and thinking.

The majority of play within the setting is child-led, with practitioners following children's interests and supporting them in using their initiative and making their own decisions. Children have extended periods to engage in play activities which means they can become deeply engrossed in what they are doing and really extend their thinking skills in a situation that is motivating and engaging to them.

Developing nurturing relationships with high quality interactions

The role of the adult in our nursery is to:

- Provide nurturing and relationships with children and families.
- Structure and resource the learning environment so that it is geared to the child's development and next steps in learning.
- Observe learning and use this to inform planning for next steps.
- Interact with children's play and learning. Adult interaction can be:
 - An adult becoming involved in a child's play, or the play of a group. Here the adult shows an interest, takes part, comments and may suggest some ideas, but does not attempt to steer the direction or the theme of the play.
 - An adult may shift from observing a child, to interacting, through spotting a "teachable moment". If a child really wants to cut a piece of paper to a particular size, this is usually the right time to teach the use of scissors!
 - An adult-directed experience. Here, an adult plans an experience which is matched to the interests and development of the child. This will often include the adult directly teaching new skills and ideas.

Relationships are in the foundations of children's development and learning. The first, and most important, and most enduring relationships are between children and their parents. The key person relationship is additional and complimentary to this.

All children at Haven have the experience of having a key person. The key person works closely with the parents to settle the child in and is a special person to the child throughout her or his time in nursery. By providing a safe and reliable relationship, the key person first works with the child's need for attachment. This attachment relationship is the starting point for independence in the nursery: the confidence to explore, make choices, play with friends or alone, safe in the knowledge that the key person is available to help when needed, but will not interfere or get in the way.

Children make sense of time passing, through the routines of interaction with their key people. For the young children, nappy changing, bottles, and sleep times punctuate the day. For all children, greetings, goodbyes and key group time are all important and consistent features of life in nursery.

Group time (family time) provides a particular point in the day when the child is in a special place, in a close-knit group, and where there is time to speak and listen during what can be a busy and energetic day. Family times are structured around the needs and interests of the children in each individual group.

Working with Parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first and most long lasting educator and that when parents and practitioners work in partnership it is of great benefit to the children. When a child starts attending Haven we strive to ensure the whole family become part of our Haven family. We work closely with parents and carers to share information which can then be built upon in school. Ongoing open dialogue between staff and parents begins with home visits before starting nursery and continues with regular formal and informal information sharing. Key People are available at all drop off and collection times and we always ensure a thorough hand over happens.

We provide regular support, information and workshops for parents that enrich and underpin the learning that is happening in nursery.

We ensure we provide regular joining in sessions for parents and younger siblings. For example, through Forest celebrations.

Providing an Enabling Environment

An enabling environment includes the emotional environment, indoor environment and outdoor environment. We ensure children at the Haven have an environment where they feel nurtured, cared for and emotionally safe and secure meaning they are able to thrive in all aspects of their development. Children have access to the indoors and outdoors in a free flow way throughout the day at all age and stages.

Well planned, organised and high quality resources that are developmentally appropriate are available through continuous provision. Children are able to select resources for themselves to support independent learning and adults will support and extend learning appropriate challenge. This all enriches and supports each child's learning journey. Children's current curiosities, fascinations and interests are reflected in the provision throughout the centre. This is an essential element of effective teaching and learning throughout the Haven.

At Haven we emphasise building learning over time. Continuity is important for progression. By providing meaningful experiences through continuous provision, we are enabling development and learning to take place. It is through an experience being provided continually, and allowing the child to revisit it whenever appropriate, and through the adult's skilled intervention and direct teaching, that progression takes place.

Enhanced provision is planned and provided to meet current needs and interests of the children. This may be in the form of resources to access during child initiated learning times, through adult led or adult directed activities. Enhancements are planned from observation and assessments and are tailored to be exciting, interesting and engaging whilst carefully matched to current needs to support children to develop new and relevant skills.

Providing high quality outdoor experiences

We understand that being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of wellbeing and helps all aspects of their development. We are committed to ensuring children have continual, free flow access to the outdoor environment. Provision is well planned with as much attention paid to resourcing as with the indoor environment. Outdoor provision is meaningful, purposeful and on a larger scale to what is provided indoors. Children access the outdoor environment in all weathers.

As well as access to outdoor garden spaces in all areas of the nursery, we have a Forest School for our 3-4 year old children. We are a recognised Forest School provider through the Forest School Association. All children will access the Forest on a regular basis and are sessions are led by qualified Forest School Leaders.

The Forest School ethos enriches and maximises children's learning through its holistic, child-led approach whilst offering community and collaborative opportunities too. Forest School sessions are highly responsive and led by children's interests and current levels of development. Through our Forest School approach children learn resilience, resourcefulness and reflectiveness. They learn to take calculated risks and care for environment around them.

Planning Personalised Learning

We whole heartedly believe children learn best when planning and provision is tailored, individual and personalised to current needs and interests of each child. Therefore the majority of our planning comes from children's fascinations and interests. Observation and assessment (individual, or at a group level) are used to capture children's interests, analysis their current level of learning/development and individual needs. This includes what we learn from parents about their children. This information is used to inform individual next steps for children. Provision, activities and experiences are carefully planned based on these next steps. We give consideration to ensuring we provide a broad and balanced curriculum

Our long term planning is linked to the environment and provision within it. We focus on events that are relevant and meaningful to the current children in our setting. Our curriculum is free flow and play-based. The high quality of continuous provision ensures that whichever choice a child makes, he or she will access a learning experience which offers access to a broad, balanced curriculum focused on learning needs.

The needs and interests of the children are also engaged through recurring interests that the children have. Some of these recurring interests are: babies, hairdressers, hospital, and birthdays to name a few. These are developed alongside the continuous provision. The interests and experiences of one child may often become a central experience for a group of children, so that they can share and extend on each other's learning.

Our planning and assessment system is linked to the EYFS framework and educational programmes, through the delivery of the bespoke Haven Curriculum Progression model.